

*From a*  
**HOSPITAL**

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**SPAIN**

*American Nurses Write*





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TO ALL FRIENDS OF SPAIN

The following letters from our nurses at the American Base Hospitals present an intimate picture of how they were received in Spain, how they live and work. They are not official reports to the Medical Bureau, but personal letters, written to friends.

Three American Base Hospitals are now in operation near Madrid. A fourth mobile unit back of the lines has been organized. Five different units of surgeons, nurses and technicians have sailed for Spain, making a total of 60 people on the American staff. About 57 tons of medical supplies and equipment have been sent, including 13 ambulances (up to May 1, 1937).

On May 19, a sixth group of 21 nurses in addition to 4 surgeons sailed for Spain, bringing with them 11 more ambulances and 10 tons of medical supplies and equipment.

The American press frequently reports the progress of our work here and in Spain. The Associated Press told how, one day in the first week of the American hospital, 900 casualties were treated with the loss of only a single life.

From Madrid each week we receive a telephone call from Dr. Edward H. Barsky, chief surgeon of our American Base Hospital, reporting on his work and needs.

We urge the readers of this booklet to take note of the repeated cables from Dr. Barsky. They speak for themselves. We urge you to read them—and to act.

MEDICAL BUREAU TO AID SPANISH DEMOCRACY  
COL. WILLIAM J. CROOKSTON  
General Secretary  
WALTER B. CANNON, M.D.  
National Chairman





Mildred Rackley

Port-Bou, Spain.

Medical Bureau to Aid Spanish Democracy,  
381 Fourth Avenue,  
New York, U.S.A.

Dear Friends:

With this letter, you will know that we are all across the Spanish border, and safely in the hands of the government officials of Valencia. The rest of the corps have gone on to Barcelona with Dr. Barsky, accompanied by a captain of the carabineros. Yesterday I received word that the freight from Havre would arrive today, Spanish trucks have come up to the border, and we will go over to Cerbere today to pay the freight bill and transfer the freight.

We had a fine trip across and landed in Havre late Saturday afternoon. We were met at the boat by the president of the Front Populaire of Havre, by the Paris World Committee, and by Andres Berdejo, First Secretary of the Spanish Embassy in Paris, and by a swarm of reporters and photographers. We were given a dinner and reception in Havre where we stayed overnight.

Sunday evening we were officially received by the Spanish Ambassador, Louis Araquistain, represented by his wife, at the Embassy.

Monday and Tuesday were spent in making the necessary purchases to complete our equipment. In this we had the constant and



splendid cooperation of the World Committee. The buying committee was established, and is now ready to function regularly in cooperation with us and with you.

Tuesday afternoon the corps visited the Spanish hospital for children, which is supported by the French government out of a fund of a half million francs set aside for that purpose. This hospital is the central organization for others near Paris which take care of wounded soldiers who need long periods of treatment and convalescence, and who are shipped up from Spain through the cooperation of the French government. The hospital is located at 53 Rue de la Pompe, and our hostess there was Madame M. Th. Frindel-Ouvrard, a doctor of the staff.

We were the guests of honor at a mass meeting arranged by the World Committee Against War and Fascism, and we were greeted with great applause and enthusiasm by the workers of Paris. Dr. Barsky spoke, explaining that we were only the vanguard of those who are coming from America, and that more doctors and nurses and equipment will follow about February 7th, and thereafter as many more as possible.

Everywhere in Paris we were received with the most intense enthusiasm and gratitude. On the route from Paris down to Barcelona the ambulance drivers were feted and cheered by the people. The trip was slowed up considerably on account of the endless receptions. All the papers in Loyalist Spain have carried the news of the arrival of the first of the "Americanos" to establish hospitals to aid the Spanish people. Yesterday the corps was officially greeted and welcomed by Luis Companys.

The French, English, Scotch, Belgians, Swedish, Swiss, and the Canadians have already sent vast numbers of doctors, ambulances and medical equipment into Loyalist Spain. This afternoon five Italian ambulances came across.

And now that we are here, all eyes are turned to America to see what she will do. We cannot disappoint them; the need is too great. More surgeons, more nurses, more ambulances and more surgical and medical equipment must flow from the United States to Spain.

MILDRED RACKLEY

Secretary, American Base Hospital  
Albacete, Spain.

(CABLE)

ARRIVED SAFELY SETTING UP FIRST HOSPITAL ALBECETE

BARSKY



Fredericka Martin

*Extracts of a letter from Fredericka Martin, Head Nurse of the first American Hospital Unit for Spain.*

Yesterday afternoon I went to two hospitals with a splendid young neurological man who had spent three years in the States and had a flow of English. I had a good opportunity to realize how truly primitive and difficult it will be to work here. For I saw the two best hospitals and an operation and I am very sorry I can't write



the details. The material improvised in a country home in the States is lavishly elaborate in contrast. At the neurological hospital I saw many cases sent back from the front. Not one of these mental cases but a mass of injuries, fractures, shrapnel wounds, etc. The combination is terrible. We are going to need iron-lined guts for this job all right. Here the hospitals are using green twigs and thin branches for fuel. I hope the winter doesn't last long where we are going.

I learned from an English woman who has been out to supervise the English unit that laundry service is difficult to obtain and the girls have little time to sleep, much less to be wash-women. And they are discarding their white uniforms completely. This woman helped plan the British uniform and she thinks our outfit much finer and is quite overcome with admiration. It has been that way all along the line. People can't get over talking about our uniform and insisting it is much better than that of any other country. I am glad we make such a good impression. I hear the British unit is having a hell of a time because they are not getting supplies. I hope there is plenty of money coming in in New York and you people will be able to keep supplies coming over constantly.

The people here have been marvelous. Everyone whom we have met has been so considerate and generous and attentive and overjoyed at this expression of help from America.

The buses just pulled in to Barcelona. I can hardly wait until we get everything together and are actually on our way to get to work. I must run along. Remember me to everyone.

FREDERICA MARTIN



Rose Freed

Dear Lou:

Hotel Orient, Barcelona

January 31, 1937

Left Paris with John Langdon Davies, who recently wrote the book "Spain Behind the Barricades," who saw us off to Cerbere. We traveled all afternoon and night. With the Pyrennes on one side and the blue Mediterranean on the other, it was really like entering Paradise. There is no country in the world more beautiful than Spain. It is hard to imagine a heinous war in this idyllic country. We stayed at Cerbere until late afternoon, at which time Spanish soldiers came up to escort us into Spain. We entered a large bus and started up the Pyrennes! The roads were perfect. For two hours we traveled up the mountain, and then to Port Bou. Radios installed in the trees shouted greetings to us. With our armed escorts and our uniforms the people were thrilled and cheered us wildly as the word got around as to who we were.

We were installed in an ancient castle, whose interior had been renovated during the World War. For the first time in twenty years it was opened—for us! With armed guards to watch over us we spent a restful night. We stayed in Port Bou for two days and then in private cars draped with American and Catalonian flags left for Barcelona, where we are now. We have been in Barcelona four days now, and on the go from 10 a.m. to 3 a.m. It is impossible to tell you how the Spanish people have catered to us. There is



nothing we wish that is not granted to us. They look upon us almost as saviors. I feel embarrassed when I remember that ours is a common cause. What suffering these poor people must have endured to display such gratefulness towards our puny aid! They cut their choicest flowers and bring them as their humble offerings to our feet. At times I feel moved to tears, and you know how hard-boiled I am, don't you. My room is flooded with roses, hyacinths, narcissus, carnations, enormous violets, and of course conilliers. Never in all my life have I even seen such beautiful flowers. The roses measure six inches in diameter.

We were taken to most of the Moorish ruins and deserted cathedrals and palaces. I have just come from the palace of Luis Companys, President of Catalonia, where we were his guests. Maurice Thorez was there too—grand person! Movietone pictures were taken of us in the orange grove garden of the palace. This palace was built in the thirteenth century. The beauty of Sert's murals, the gargoyles, the gold inlay ceilings and the huge crystal chandeliers were breath-taking. I left entranced. How bitter the thought that Franco and his fascist horde is burning, plundering, destroying, yes, raping glorious Spain.

One day five of us girls decided to take a walk. Barcelona under normal conditions has one and a half million people. Now there are thrice that number as refugees continue to pour in from the surrounding countryside, and the streets are more crowded than Fourteenth Street, New York. Some Hungarian gypsies started to annoy us, even after we had given them several pesetas apiece. An Englishman and several Dutch boys came to our rescue—quite timely—and gallantly led us away. The Englishman was—John Langdon Davies! It was as though meeting a long lost friend again. He took us shopping and then to lunch at the Ritz Hotel. This hotel, he said, was the most beautiful hotel in the world (and

he should know, too). He had traveled over the world, he said, and had never seen a more glamorous one. On the first floor the orange groves shielded the gambling tables under huge, brilliant lights, as the rich played and enjoyed their stay in Barcelona—enjoyed the marble floors and stairways and balconies and magnificent murals. But all that now is like the distant past. When the revolution broke out the waiters and cooks took over the hotel and made a cooperative restaurant out of it. This restaurant now seats 3,000 people at one sitting. None of its beauty has been marred. Of course, some of the furnishings have been taken out in order to seat so many people. The waiters are scrupulously careful that nothing is injured in any way. Davies then took us to an ice cream parlor where we had a poor imitation of the American soda. We went back to the hotel to dress and then attended a musical and ballet given in our honor.

The Spanish men, especially the captains that have been assigned to escort us in these various towns are very fine and gallant. Franco may win the war (may! mind you!) but never will he conquer such determined spirits. It is obvious that he has no popular support.

Well, I must dress to meet La Passionara tonight. I have been writing this letter in spasms for three days now, and have given up a theatre engagement to finish it, for we are leaving for Valencia Wednesday or Thursday. I'm anxious to get to work. From Valencia we are going to Madrid. The receptions are tiring, but the sight of the almond trees and olive trees in bloom now are never so. I love this velvet grass, these beautiful palms and huge cactus, the semi-tropical climate, this soft, melodious southern air. Lovely Spain, cool breezes and warm suns—and Franco! A hard to imagine paradox. . . .

Have my friends write to me. We would all rather receive letters from home than sleep.

Lots of love to everyone.

ROSE.



(CABLE)

NEED IMMEDIATELY FOUR THOUSAND YARDS CUT GAUZE STOP CARTON  
ADHESIVE ROLLS STOP TWO CASES WIDE BANDAGES GAUZE TWO TWO  
AND HALF THREE STOP FOUR BOXES BLACK SILK SUTURE STOP HUNDRED  
FIFTY POUNDS TALCUM

BARSKY

Albacete, Spain.

We are now settled in a new school house, with no sanitary facilities (we all wonder how the Spaniards manage), a very feeble electric line, no telephone, no water, and a pretty awful road. We went immediately to the alcalde (mayor), head of the Popular Front, asking him for the full cooperation of the village in the installation and operation of the hospital. They did absolutely everything for us. We had dozens and dozens of men carrying out school desks and tables, the electricians were wiring the building for lights, the telephone service were installing two telephones, all the masons in the village were working the entire night knocking through a wall to connect the upper and lower floors. Another crew were unloading trucks, still another opening crates, and an army of women were sweeping and washing floors. There was no place to eat, and no kitchen in the building.

*We had orders to open the hospital for work in forty-eight hours, and we were giving everything we had, every one of us—to have the hospital ready.*

On the third day, the patients began to pour in. We got forty the first day.

The roads for six kilometers on either side of us were so bad that it would have killed a patient to take him over them in ambulances. We spoke to the alcalde, and the next day all the peasants were

forbidden to go to the fields, and literally thousands of men—all those not fighting at the front—were working on the road, carrying baskets of stones and filling in the holes, then baskets of earth to put around the stones. I can't tell you the feeling it gave me when we took the first bus over the road, and all along the way, *Salud! Salud!* from every one of them.

Practically all the soldiers we got were badly wounded, and all had to have operations. Many of them were shot through the skull, others through the chest, and numbers of them had nasty abdominal perforations. Every operation that Dr. Edward Barsky performed was really a work of art. And every member of the staff has helped whenever possible and in every way with all kinds of work. One night at 2 o'clock, in the middle of an operation, the battery went dead. All of us ran for our flashlights, and with the feeble glimmer of eight flashlights, Dr. Barsky finished removing a shattered kidney.

Last week we had about sixty coming in in a few hours, the doctors and nurses were working forty hours without stopping, going from one major operation to the next.

You will see from this the pressing need for able surgeons in all fields. Besides the initial seventeen in our American personnel we have about fifty people working for us, including eight chauffeurs, nine cooks, ten assistant nurses, ten washwomen, scrubwomen, seamstresses, stretcher carriers, etc.

*We have to have more surgeons, nurses, ambulances and supplies, and we have confidence in you that you will send them.*

MILDRED RACKLEY, Secretary.

(CABLE)

AMERICAN HOSPITAL BOMBED NIGHT RAID ALL SAFE

BARSKY





Lini Fuhr

March 15, 1937.

Dear Ida:

The light streams across my shoulder from a small window high in the wall. I am awaiting patients to be evacuated. Just came to this hospital last night at 12 p.m. (very tired). This evidently was an old convent at one time. Now it is a pretty cold place. I have on winter underwear—sweater and my cape—still I am cold. Hated to have to leave our other hospital. It was running so well. Our house that we live in was just rigged up with a shower and a radio the day I moved. I came last of all—now our whole medical unit is here in charge of three hospitals. Very shortly we hope to have this like our other place. Much nearer the scene of action now—a little too near for comfort—*c'est la guerre!*

Next day—10 a.m.—same room.

Feel good today—got a whole night's sleep from 8 p.m. till 6:30 this a.m.—what to some one else is a bottle of champagne is a night's sleep and an American cigarette to us.

My nurse Modesta came yesterday p.m. with one of our ambulances and I was glad to see her—nothing is too much for her—four weeks ago she was a peasant girl—today she gives hypos.

Just now a Negro, Frenchman, and a few Germans, Spaniards and others walked in, waiting for dressings. We are so needed here

—you cannot imagine—even if I wanted to come home—doubt if I could. Everything I have ever learned I can use here. Imagine—working and knowing every step one takes is helping these men who are fighting our fight against fascism.

Today at two we have a gas mask drill and get our helmets—half a block away bombs demolished the place—bloody fascists are trying to get the road my hospital is on. We have four hospitals here.

My patients are singing near me—the French Front Populaire song. They are always asking me to sing.

One morning from 4 a.m. till 5 a.m. I stood with a Dutchman while he was going out. His last words were “No Parasan.” He asked me to sing to him and with tears streaming I did. One doctor accused me of being sentimental, staying with him instead of sleeping (I had been up since 6 the day before). If that's sentiment—let's have more of it. These are not ordinary soldiers dying—but going out into the struggle against fascism for you and me, for the Spanish people and the whole world. I could weep when any of them goes out before my eyes. I have seen the results of dum-dum bullets—I know what beasts the fascists are. The struggle is not 4,000 miles away, but affects everyone.

Give my love to my friends. Write soon.

LINI.

(CABLE)

CARS AUTOBUSES NECESSARY TRANSPORT LIGHTLY WOUNDED STOP  
HOSPITAL MOVED CLOSER FRONT MORE BEDS MORE PERSONNEL

BARSKY

From Fredericka Martin, Head Nurse.

Anna dear:

I have heard just twice from the States and one note mentioning



the fact that you were busy organizing a Women's Auxiliary to the Medical Bureau.

The lovely blanket you contributed is warming such a splendid young Spanish boy right now. We are all cowering in the present rainy damp weather inside these stone walls, even in bed with hot water bottles, and we have to pile blankets on our poor patients until they are nearly worn out by the weight alone. Liss' blanket is helping Sally Kahn, Jack's aunt, right now. She is ill with the gripe, broken down from overwork. And we have her rolled in a blanket and hot water water bottles, trying to keep her warm.

We have been here three weeks this afternoon. We started to unload our furniture about four o'clock. Two days later we received patients and worked madly day and night. I wish I could convey my pride in my girls. They have been superhuman. They have never lost their cheerful spirit or quarreled with each other or grumbled. Not *once* has a nurse been for a stroll. You see, it is the nurse that oils the cogs of the hospital machinery. She prepares for the operations, and all the time she is caring for the patients. And except for one dreadful night when the floors were covered with wounded men on stretchers and borrowed mattresses, the patients here have had as good nursing care and better than many, as any ward patient in New York City.

We have thirteen Spanish girls whom we are trying to train but the results have been pretty hopeless up to now. Most of the actual work was done by our handful. When I tell you the girls had such swollen feet that some of them had to wear floppy patient's slippers in order to walk, it must sound unreal. But it is true. Running back and forth over these tiled floors is terrifically wearing. I had an old pair of white sandals that were still strong but stretched out because I wore them with woolen anklets. Well, wearing them one day without anklets, I burst the center strap of each one. I couldn't believe my own eyes, it was so bad.

I wish you would tell Jack Kahn how wonderful Sally has been. She has charge of our top floor with beds for 54 patients and space for extra mattresses. If you could have seen with your own eyes how neat and orderly those wards looked, the beds in orderly lines, the corners of the beds neat and trim, and the faces of the patients smiling, contented and happy. Our greatest reward is the grief the patients display when they have to be moved on to the larger base hospital. And people come back from the front with stories that our fame has spread and all the boys want to be sent to Romeral if they are wounded.

The only trouble with Sally is that I cannot get her off duty at night. She is supposed to work from 7 to 7 in the day and Lini Fuhr has the three wards on the lower floor for the same hours. At night, Ray Harris works on both floors with six Spanish girls to sit around and watch the patients and give them drinks and keep their hot water bottles filled. But every hour or so after seven I would spend a futile few minutes with Sally, extracting a promise to go over to bed, and then an hour later I'd find her still on duty. And she would plead, "But, Freddie, I just had to do this for this patient. He's suffering so." And I would scold her like the devil and love her all the more for her devotion. At times there is no question of any nurse working less than 18 hours a day or more. But these scenes took place when we were beginning to slow down a bit a few days ago. And yesterday Sally did collapse and is ill. All but one nurse has been ill in bed for two days and the cause was overwork. You can imagine how eagerly I am looking forward to the addition of more nurses to our group. If they cannot send us nurses, they could ship over six brawny women and assure our keeping on working. For if we get no reinforcements after six months all of us will be ready for the scrap heap. And four or six women, nurses, now, would mean we could manage the work and keep going for years.



I suppose you wonder what the rest of us are doing. I spoke of three nurses. Anna Taft and Helen Freeman work in the operating room—night and day. For there are tremendous technical preparations between periods of continuous operating. When poor Taft stands for ten to twelve hours in her gown and gloves, assisting first one doctor operating and then another, and Helen runs back and forth, real perpetual motion at last.

Our lab. technician, Rose Freed, sandwiches in a great deal of nursing along with her laboratory work and is a peach. Myself—I don't know what I do or don't do, really. I had to plan meals for the two kitchens, run the cleaning women, laundresses, two dreamy Don Juans who are supposed to be stretcher bearers and are just too illusive for worlds, always vanishing into thin air, buy some supplies in the village, give the nurses a helping hand everywhere and mother all the personnel. When I cracked up a few days ago, I had a record of three sleepless nights and a maximum four-hour nap one night. And the first day I spent in bed I was delirious at times and issuing orders in English and in Spanish for every sort of job. The strain has been terrible for it was just one million times more difficult to do since I had only a few words of Spanish and signs to see that most of the work was done. I didn't crack from the strain but a patient walking from the ambulance fainted and there was only another girl there and we had to get him into the house. And lifting him I strained myself but after two days in bed I'm hale and hearty again. Only, once I was down, the nervous strain had a chance to express itself.

I can now keep things running much more easily and smoothly and devote a little more time to attempting to teach the Spanish girls the minimum arts of the trade. What an unending task. They are so good. They want to do their best for the wounded. They will watch a bed made and copy it exactly under my eye. The second bed will be fairly well made. But when I come back to

inspect the third bed, they have forgotten the draw sheet or have left the corners hanging. So we start all over again. And they will make the tops of the beds with patients in them look very neat and the draw sheet under the patient will be bloody or wet or soiled. They weep bitter tears when I hold forth dramatically in a few words and many gestures about the necessity of the patient being kept dry, warm and clean—but the tears seem to wash their memories clean. But we start patiently over again and I'm still hopeful and still patient.

I sleep in the linen room on the second floor where I can be reached at night by either a doctor, the American nurse or a Spanish aide if there is any emergency or crisis. The pharmacist also sleeps in the drug room on this floor—on call all night. One night, one of my sweet little Spanish aides woke me at 4 A.M. to ask if I would like hot milk. All I could do was laugh. I couldn't be cross at losing some sleep over such artless concern. I am "muy simpatica" according to all of them but they jump when I speak just the same. When I was ill they massed around my door and created a traffic problem, cooks, scrub women, aides, stretcher bearers, all. But my discipline is so severe that the night cook was afraid to sit down to rest lest "Martina" find her.

The greatest tribulation of the nurses at present is the inability to keep neat and trim. The village laundresses cannot iron. Our uniforms come back a mess of wrinkles. Starch is hard to buy—so far we haven't found any. We have only one electric iron with us and the current is not strong enough to heat it. If we move on soon, we will always be in a village or the country; meeting the same conditions. We started out with starch but the box containing it was lost. We can make ourselves feel fairly clean with a sponge bath, but then we step into wrinkled uniforms and it is most depressing. Can the Women's Auxiliary take on the special task of helping the nurses and send them starch and irons, old-fashioned



country ones for use on a stove, and since our uniforms will soon be in tatters because of the rigorous washing they get, these too. If we get starch and irons, we will take care of our own laundry. Nothing can break the morale so quickly as having to look like shabby cave women. Actually there were fewer wrinkles in our uniforms when they went to the wash than there are now, when they are brought back. It is indescribable. We want to keep on with the same uniform which we all love and cherish and try to wear proudly.

And if you succeed in that much help to us and want to do more or know individuals who would like to send supplies to us, here are suggestions: candy, fruit, cake, crackers, cheese and fish pastes, cigarettes, of course, George Washington coffee. Small parcels are more apt to reach us than large. When we are working at a headlong tempo, I am still able to fish down into my trunk and bring out a treat. You see, on the boat we girls decided to save our boxes of candy for Spain and they were entrusted to me to dispense when I thought them most needed. I can still, as I said, provide another dozen treats, when work is terrific and goat meat or beans seem so difficult to swallow, I put two pieces of candy apiece on a plate and put it in the center of the table and a cry of joy goes round and a yell that "Ma" is on the job again.

I had a small fruit cake and one day we had such a strain and a patient we all loved died, and I made tea and called them into my room and fed each one a tablespoon of fruit cake. We had no knives at the time—hence the tablespoon. The result was dynamic. Anne stopped shivering, Sally's lips got a bit of color in them, etc. And I wished I had brought a trunkful of fruitcake for them.

I am writing so hastily in an effort to utilize a free hour, never knowing when an ambulance will drive up and the mad rush begin again. All our lives we seem to have been running back and forth

along these cold corridors. All our lives we have hated white moonlight because it means the birds of death are busy nearby, sometimes close to us, and we can never again consider moonlight beautiful or an aid to romance. All our lives we have been hating as we have learned to hate here, when we see the ravages of dum-dum bullets in the flesh and bones of the best youth of all the world. The other thing I wanted to mention is the special strain of this nursing. There is nothing impersonal about it. These patients are a part of us. When they suffer, we suffer and learn to hate more. There is a terrific emotional drain always. If you have any voice in the committee, beg them to send us more nurses and doctors. Don't let them forget us. They can never fill the need here but they must never stop trying.

My best to you.

FREDDIE.

(CABLE)

NEED IMMEDIATELY SURGICAL NEEDLES SUTURES EYE INSTRUMENTS  
WIRE SPLINTS COMPLETE CRANIOTOMY OUTFIT SIX DOZEN INTRAVENOUS  
NEEDLES GROSS LUER HYPODERMIC NEEDLES DOZEN SPINAL TAP  
NEEDLES

BARSKY

March 20, 1937

Dear Lou:

We left Remoral a little over a week ago. We are in Tarancon now. In another week or so we shall move again. In Remoral we put in what I thought was a sanatorium, but I read too that it was a school house. It certainly was a modern beautiful building. The efficiency of the hospital was like that of one in peace and not war. When I did not work 40 hours at one stretch I was night charge nurse. In



fact, that's what I'm doing just now. It is 5:30 a.m., and I've just finished making the rounds of our three hospitals—giving medications and hypos and dressing wounds and circulating in the operating room.

I was very glad to hear that Dr. B . . . is doing such good work for Spain. The money you collected could best be used in buying a small generator. We need one badly. A few days ago Tarancon was bombarded. I explained that there are three hospitals here that we are in charge of. Hospital No. 3 is on the Valencia Road, and that of course was the target. One grape fell about 5 yards from the hospital, crashing all the windows and breaking the water main. For four days there was no water for the patients. When a bombardment is expected all the lights are put out. If the surgeon happens to be operating he must continue with only the dim rays of the flash light. If we had our generator we could supply our own electricity and would not have to depend upon a central plant.

We need 1,000 more beds, 14,000 more sheets, 3,000 more pillow cases, 7,000 blankets and 2,000 mattresses. A hospital that has 120 beds and all beds occupied may receive 400 more patients in one evening. The boys suffer so much—there is no reason why we cannot have a bed for each one instead of using the floor or a narrow stretcher when they are in excruciating pain.

I need not mention the fact that nurses and surgeons are in great demand. The money raised for Spain should help our plight very much. There is little food here and if possible send us at least 500 pounds of good chocolate bars, as much sugar as possible and as many cigarettes as money can buy.

It is three days now that I started to write this letter. It is March 23 now at 12 noon. We have just evacuated many patients to the base hospitals and the doctors and nurses have collected in my room. I cannot sleep. They are dancing and singing and their conversation is only of home.

It is March 27th now, at 11 a.m. I just got off duty and was told to go to the post office to get your registered letter. It made my morning pleasant.

Last night it was Dr. Goland's birthday. We had a party at the American Casa. I made rounds and came to see how things were going at the party. We had just given Dr. Goland his birthday present, which consisted of one dozen tooth brushes each in the center of a cup cake with bristles exposed and blue ribbon tied to each, when at twelve midnight the light went out. We heard the roar of planes. There was a long silence in the room. I spoke. I said I was going to the hospital. Dr. Bloom shouted, "If you think anything of your life don't go." Dr. Barsky said he was going to the hospital. I ran to hospital No. 3 on the Valencia Road, Dr. Barsky to hospital No. 1, and Dr. Odio to Hospital No. 2. I stayed outside the door of the hospital searching the brilliantly studded starry sky for a sight of the planes, but they were too high and had no lights. They circled overhead many times, they came lower and lower and the sound of the motors became louder and louder. I ran into the hospital only to find some of the Spanish enfermos in hysterics. They could not be blamed, they who so many times have been terrorized by the lousy tactics of the fascists, and whose minds reflected the fatalities of such terrorism, and whose fathers, brothers, sweethearts and husbands died on the battlefields singing the Internationale as their last strength ebbed out for the cause of democracy and love for humanity—could they be blamed for hysteria when they realized what was coming? What right had I to be frightened I who had just tasted what they have long lived through? With my heart pounding almost as loudly as the roar of the motors above, I spoke to them. I told them they must be brave. I told them that they must comfort their brothers of Spain who are lying in bed helpless, most of them unable to move. I felt strong and stern—what did it matter our lives to be sacrificed for so many that they may continue to live in



peace. They clung to me with an almost deadly grip, kissed me and dried their tears. The crash—you cannot—never can anyone realize the horror of what seems like the earth opening beneath you—the light of the magnesium flare bomb to see if they struck right—and then eight more crashes—then silence, too long, and shrapnel flying in all directions. I ran to Hospital No. 1, then to Hospital No. 2, then back to my post where I found all crying silently. I made them all go to sleep and stayed on alone. Later in the morning Dr. Sorrel took the post with me.

You ask me to write of the Spanish people. All I can say is that they are the most simple, most grateful and most lovable people in the world, but I am isolated from them. I am with the soldiers—how can I write more about them?

I judge the spirit by the soldiers. An ambulance came in with 30 wounded. We started to take care of the wounds and bandage them before we put them into bed. A young Spaniard (he must have been 16 years old at the most) became inpatient. He took out his penknife, cut open the palm of his hand and removed the superficial inflicted bullet (all this without our knowledge). Then he held up his wounded bloody hand and bullet and shouted, "Comrade medico, salute." And holding his head high he continued and shouted, "No pasaran!" In Spanish "No pasaran" means that Franco shall not pass. The bullet, you see, did not pass through the palm of his hand. It was not deeply imbedded. How's that for spirit!

I should love to have newspapers. Also literature. Answer soon and I shall look for time to write more often. Tell ma not to worry.

Lots of love to all,

ROSE



(CABLE)

STARTING SECOND BASE HOSPITAL SIX FIFTY BEDS STOP MUST HAVE ORTHOPEDIST EXPERT SURGEONS AND ASSISTANTS STOP LAUNDRY OUTFIT SEDANS AMBULANCES TRUCKS STOP SECOND UNIT ARRIVED STOP SPEED UP GOOD WORK

BARSKY

## INTERVIEW WITH DR. EDWARD H. BARSKY

Station EAQ, Madrid, Spain—Friday, April 9

*Question:* I will begin, Dr. Barsky, by asking you what recent developments of the American Hospital work would be of most interest to American listeners.

*Answer:* I would say the question that the new personnel and equipment has arrived. This enables us to increase our work in Spain well beyond anything we have done so far.

*Question:* Are your new people and equipment already at work?

*Answer:* Yes, we have set up two new base hospitals and a mobile operating unit. This operating unit will work close behind the lines and will shift from place to place. We have no compunction about admitting that we have enough equipment to start. If we could only get what America could send there would be no limit to the excellent work we could do. We have the full cooperation of the Spanish government and are all set to take care of 650 patients. It is our ambition to have the finest hospital in Spain.



*Question:* How would you explain to your friends in America what the Spanish war is like in terms of suffering and horror.

*Answer:* Mere words cannot sufficiently describe the suffering and horror. The great number of patients with faces, legs and arms shot away and eyes out is a gruesome sight. During the first two days that our hospital was set up the wounded began arriving in great numbers. Soon all our beds were occupied, then our stretchers and mattresses and finally all available floor space. It was terrible. The young men were suffering wounds of the brain, face, abdomen, legs and arms—blood all over the place—the groans of the patients and the ambulances coming in with more and more wounded. But we continued working, determined not only to complete the task in hand but to continue until this invasion is over. We worked forty hours straight without a stop. I shall never forget the desperate manner in which my two assistants, Drs. Goland and Byrne, lifted the last patient off the operating table and carried him to bed.

*Question:* Have you personally seen evidences of German and Italian intervention in Spain?

*Answer:* I certainly have. I have seen pieces of German and Italian bombs. One bomb failed to explode. It was made in Germany. I took a picture of it. You know that bombing planes cannot go out of Germany without the knowledge of the government. Many a time we have removed German bullets from our wounded. The wounded came in wearing Italian shoes and clothing and other things which had been captured. And German planes are a common sight.

*Question:* Could you testify that the fascists are fighting with weapons which are forbidden by the League of Nations?

*Answer:* Absolutely. There is evidence of dum-dum bullets and I have seen a great number of them.

*Question:* Do you think it is possible that the fascists will use

poison gas after their defeat at Guadalajara? Are you prepared for this?

*Answer:* I am sure that they will. The defeats at Guadalajara and Pozoblanco were drastic defeats not only to the fascist military machines but also to their prestige in world affairs. They will stop at nothing in an attempt to regain some of the influence in world politics that they have lost. They will surely use all sorts of poison gases. We are prepared for this. We have gas masks and have received instructions as to their use.

*Question:* Have your ambulances and hospital ever been attacked by the fascists?

*Answer:* Yes not so long ago our hospital was bombed. Nine bombs were dropped about 250 meters away from the hospital. None of our groups was injured. Once at night when our ambulances were transporting wounded the fascist planes attempted to bomb them. They came close but missed. We have seen the same thing in Ethiopia. It is pure destructive terrorism!

*Question:* Have you noticed among the wounded a conviction in their cause?

*Answer:* Certainly. The wonderful morale and courage can only result from a deep conviction in the justice, the necessity and the worthiness of the war that they are waging. It is inspiring to witness the wonderful spirit that all the wounded have—they try to assist each other and cooperate with everyone. It is only because they each and every one of them know that they are fighting and why they are fighting that they are able to carry on as they do. You should hear them discuss the political implications of this fight and the need for concerted action of all the people in Loyalist Spain and the democratic people throughout the world. They know what it is all about. They are not adventurers. They do not fight for pay. They know that they are defending their lives, their homes and



their country from fascism and also that they are fighting the danger of world fascism. That is how these people speak. That is why they face the danger and hardships of this war. It is truly a people's army that will never be demoralized. They have a political awareness that is not usually found in armies. They will never be demoralized but we have heard of plenty of demoralization among the fascists. They will win this fight. Such an army can never lose.

*Question:* Are you satisfied with your activities here Dr. Barsky; can you advise your American colleagues to follow your example in Spain which has been so admirable?

*Answer:* I certainly am satisfied. It is a source of great satisfaction to anyone who possesses some technical skill and is in favor of peace and democracy to come to Spain and help out. Here is an opportunity to do good work that is sorely needed. We can use every bit of assistance that Americans can offer. We need expert surgeons and assistants and all the nurses possible. We can use all sorts of surgical and medical equipment plus automobiles and a great number of roomy and well built ambulances and large buses which are a great help in transporting the lightly wounded. Let me urge every surgeon, physician and nurse, all who are for peace and democracy and against fascism to come to Spain and take part in this great struggle. Apply to the Medical Bureau to Aid Spanish Democracy, 381 Fourth Avenue, New York City, for information and assistance. I am happy that I am here and that I for one can put my special experience and knowledge to some worthwhile use.

*Question:* Could I ask you, Dr. Barsky, what was your motive in going to Spain?

*Answer:* In the first place the realization that here in Spain was the most vicious attack of the fascists against the legally elected government of the people. This battle was instigated and for the most part fought by outsiders and in reality represents opposing forces of

world democracy and fascism. This is a battle not only against invaders, but also against the world onslaught of fascism of Hitler and Mussolini. The results of this war will be felt throughout the world. The shortsighted political policies of some world powers has allowed an invasion that could have been smashed within a few weeks to drag along with untold misery and great loss of life. Every lover of democracy, every person who stands for progress, every adherent of ordinary freedom, every anti-fascist, should know that this is his or her battle and should do everything possible to help. I felt this way and came to do what I can best do and in that capacity where I have special training and to do my share in this fight.

*Question:* Instead of asking you a final question, I will leave it to you to say whatever you want.

*Answer:* There are several things I would like to say. I want to take this special opportunity of letting the Americans know of the wonderful work that our nurses have done. These girls have worked under all sorts of strain with a willingness and courage that between you and me is a source of inspiration to the doctors. Our head nurse, Miss Martin, not only is head nurse but assisting operating room nurse, housekeeper, manager, doing every odd job that has turned up. I couldn't have gotten along without her. Our chauffeurs have been working hard and the ambulances have been running without a stop. The doctors have found plenty of hard work and all sorts of work. Everything now is running smoothly and with our new set-up, our new personnel, you can expect more and more from the American medical unit in Spain.

In conclusion, let me once more urge the Medical Bureau and all friends to increase the wonderful support they are giving us for this medical work in Spain. We need all the help you can give and if I can be allowed a personal touch, regards to Bobby, George, Arthur, Helen and Jesse too. Good night, America.



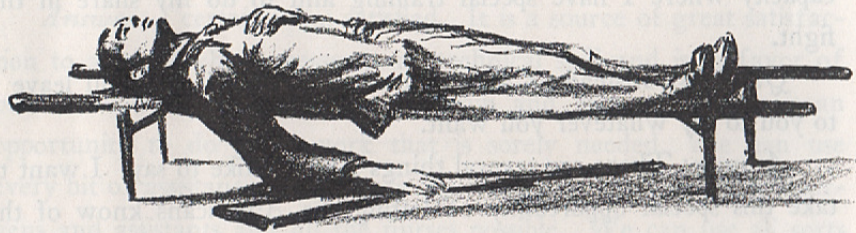
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1 Dose of Tetanus Anti-toxin .....	.65....
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